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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

28 March 1986

Korean Competition in Africa: International  
Prestige at Stake

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Summary

North Korea's renewed drive to win allies at South Korea's expense has made little headway in Africa, where expulsions, contract cancellations, and a rejection of the cohosting idea by African Olympic committees capped a bad year for P'yongyang. North Korea was asked to leave Uganda, Lesotho, Seychelles, and Somalia, and now its military presence in Madagascar is threatened because of dissatisfaction with the high cost and poor quality of its equipment and training.

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Despite such setbacks, we expect North Korea will keep pressing for Third World political support; P'yongyang is especially active when it sees an opening or need to score a diplomatic or propaganda victory in its global competition with

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South Korea--and the 1988 Olympics provide just such an occasion. Although Soviet and North Korean military interests may coincide in some instances in Africa and elsewhere, we have seen no evidence that P'yongyang is acting at Moscow's direction. [redacted]

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The South Koreans, meanwhile, have mounted their own diplomatic offensive in Africa, driven in part by their goal of ensuring full participation in the Seoul Olympics. Seoul's major leg up has been economic assistance for the region's impoverished countries. As the South tries to capitalize on recent North Korean setbacks in Africa, we expect Seoul to call on Washington and its allies to help build its influence in Africa. [redacted]

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### Diplomatic Competition

Since Seoul's selection as the site for the 1988 Olympic Games, North Korea has stepped up its efforts to improve its own international standing by seeking Third World support for its positions on reunification of the Korean peninsula, withdrawal of US troops in South Korea, and, more recently, cohosting--or a boycott--of the Seoul Games. The 46 Nonaligned nations in sub-Saharan Africa offer fertile ground for P'yongyang's efforts to best the South. The region is the only one where North Korea has an edge over South Korea in diplomatic representation (see chart), and P'yongyang has tried to maintain its position by capitalizing on its early support for African preindependence movements and its quick recognition of their new governments. North Korea has emphasized its Nonaligned credentials and its image as a cohesive, authoritarian state. This model appeals to some African leaders, including Ethiopia's Chairman Mengistu, Madagascar's President Ratsiraka, and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Mugabe, who have publicly expressed their admiration of President Kim Il-song. The North also has increased the number of invitations to African leaders to tour P'yongyang, promoted cultural exchanges, and financed chuche--self-reliance--study groups to peddle its political wares. [redacted]

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### Economic Competition: The South's Strong Suit

South Korea's own campaign for influence and diplomatic recognition has made gains in the region, relying most heavily on its substantial--by African standards--economic inducement. For example, according to an official Bissau announcement, Seoul won formal recognition from Guinea-Bissau in 1984 after donating six luxury automobiles, 40 tractors, and 20 other vehicles. In 1985, both Koreas donated sports equipment to Mauritius for the Indian Ocean Games, but Seoul was able to open a diplomatic mission in Mauritius--despite P'yongyang's objections--only after providing

[redacted]

six automobiles and \$188,000, according to sources of the US Embassy in Port Louis. [redacted]

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South Korea also has used economic pressure to impede the North's influence. In our view, a South Korean donation of \$50,000 in 1985 and establishment of a medical assistance program probably explain Swaziland's rejection of several North Korean requests for diplomatic relations. [redacted]

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Seoul's reliance on economic ties makes it vulnerable to African efforts to play North against South to extract the maximum aid:

- In late 1984, for example, President Chun sent a special envoy to Ivory Coast hoping to dissuade President Houphouet from recognizing P'yongyang. Houphouet requested greatly increased economic aid, and, when South Korea refused, Ivory Coast established ambassador-level ties with the North.
- In Cape Verde, according to sources of the US Embassy in Seoul, a formal announcement of recognition has been stalled by Seoul's reluctance to compel Korean fishing boats to use local repair facilities.
- In 1984, after South Korea donated \$50,000 to Niger and opened an embassy, a local official told the US Embassy that Niger had linked closer relations with increased economic assistance. [redacted]

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North Korea's economy constrains P'yongyang's efforts to match South Korean largesse. When the Guinean President sent a delegation to Seoul in 1984 to discuss economic ties, North Korea quickly dispatched a delegation to Conakry to propose closer economic cooperation. The intervention blocked recognition of Seoul [redacted]

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To get the most visibility from its limited resources, North Korea has built monuments and public buildings, often defraying expenses by insisting that the local government pay the salaries and living expenses of North Korean workers and advisers. Construction of these buildings frequently fuels North-South competition--shortly after North Korea announced its plans to build a National Assembly for the Central African Republic in 1984, South Korea gave the government 12 trucks and automobiles. In Equatorial Guinea, P'yongyang promised to complete a convention hall only after the government asked the

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South Koreans to pick up construction costs, according to sources of the US Embassy in Yaounde. [REDACTED]

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### Military Aid--Recent Setbacks for P'yongyang

To supplement its ideological message and counteract Seoul's economic advantages, P'yongyang relies heavily on military assistance. North Korean military advisers have trained presidential guards and other security units in Togo, Uganda, Madagascar, Seychelles, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Burkina-Faso. In addition:

- A North Korean team, although reduced from approximately 100 to 10 in 1985, trained the Zimbabwean 5th Brigade--used extensively in antidissident operations--and, [REDACTED] supplied military equipment, including 20 armored personnel carriers, to the Zimbabwean Army.

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- North Korea has agreed to supply Zimbabwe with small arms to support its operations in Mozambique. Harare is also negotiating with P'yongyang for the construction of an ammunition factory in Zimbabwe,

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[REDACTED] North Korean military trainers--perhaps as many as 150--in Angola.

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Here too, however, North Korean setbacks may offer opportunities for Seoul. Several countries have become increasingly dissatisfied with North Korean military training methods and poor-quality equipment, as well as with the high costs of salaries and billeting. By last summer, the Ugandan Government had decided to phase out the costly North Korean military training program [REDACTED]. Although a coup toppled President Obote before he could take

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[redacted]

action, over 200 North Korean military and civilian advisers subsequently left the country in August at the request of the interim Okello government. [redacted]

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The expulsion of its advisers was certainly a serious disappointment for P'yongyang; however, Uganda's new President Museveni told the British press in February 1986 he may ask North Korean military advisers to return. Although North Korea certainly wishes to retain relations with Uganda--President Kim Il-song congratulated Museveni upon the latter's assumption of office--we believe the relationship will be strained because of the strong North Korean links to the Obote regime. [redacted]

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[redacted]

In our view, it is possible that Uganda's threat to call back the North Koreans is simply an effort to win increased economic or military aid--Seoul recently donated \$100,000 to Uganda and announced that it was ready to name a new ambassador. [redacted]

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Host dissatisfaction with equipment and staff also seemed to be behind North Korea's problems in Zimbabwe last year, when the government cut back the large North Korean military team that had trained the notoriously brutal 5th Brigade and presidential guard in Zimbabwe. [redacted]

[redacted] spent more time teaching political thought than basic infantry tactics. [redacted]

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Finally, in late 1985, a group of about 10 North Korean military instructors left Burkina-Faso [redacted]

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Other issues have caused trouble for P'yongyang elsewhere in Africa:

-- [redacted] Seychelles President Rene informed North Korea in August 1985 that the military training agreement between the two countries would not be renewed, and about 50 to 100 North Koreans reportedly left in September. Although Rene indicated the North Koreans would be replaced with Tanzanians, we believe he has been unable to negotiate an agreement with Tanzania, and some Koreans--estimated at 80 by the US Embassy in Seychelles--probably remain. Rene's dissatisfaction with the North Koreans stems in part from P'yongyang's intense pressure on Seychelles to announce a boycott of the Seoul Olympics, according to sources of the US Embassy in Tanzania.

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- In Lesotho, a group of North Korean military trainers, as well as agricultural and construction workers, were expelled in January 1986 after a coup ousted Prime Minister Jonathan.

- P'yongyang's relations with Somalia have deteriorated because of North Korea's expanding ties to Ethiopia.

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### Looking Ahead to the Olympic Games

As the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympics approach, we expect North Korea to advertise its ties to the Nonaligned Movement and to press member states to lend rhetorical support to its position in North-South reunification talks and back its call for cohosting, a joint team, or boycott of the Olympics. The response so far, however, has been poor. P'yongyang failed to win support for a cohosting resolution at a meeting of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa in December 1985. In the months before the Nonaligned Foreign Ministers' Conference in Angola in September 1985, North Korea pressed unsuccessfully for an anti-South Korean resolution; we believe P'yongyang will redouble such efforts at the Nonaligned Summit Meeting in Zimbabwe this August. Because the site of the 1988 Nonaligned Foreign Ministers' Conference has not been chosen, we expect P'yongyang will bid for hosting rights.

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North Korea's political influence will probably remain strongest in those countries--Ethiopia, Madagascar, Zimbabwe--where leaders are attracted to Kim Il-song's style of centralized one-man rule, and to his independent socialist ideology. We expect North Korea also will look for other openings to strengthen ties to African nations. P'yongyang almost certainly is aware of Zimbabwe's difficulty in financing this fall's Nonaligned Summit. It would be consistent with past North Korean behavior to offer funding in exchange for backing on an anti-Seoul resolution. Cuba and the Soviet Union probably also will provide funds to Zimbabwe, but, in this case, as in other instances where North Korean and Soviet interests have coincided in the Third World, we have seen no evidence that P'yongyang is acting at Moscow's direction. North Korea will primarily seek to serve its own goals in relation to Seoul, not function in an assigned role as a Soviet surrogate.

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To counter P'yongyang's political ties to Third World countries and push Seoul's Olympic priority, President Chun has ordered a stepped-up diplomatic effort to improve ties to Nonaligned and Communist countries. Economic aid will be a key part of that campaign. Seoul was undoubtedly relieved when the African National Olympic Committee declined to consider a Malagasy motion supporting North-South cohosting of the Olympics and probably will try to isolate North Korea further on the Olympic issue by offering assistance such as the \$2.12 million donated to African drought relief in 1985. South Korea's generosity, however, faces constraints. We expect expenses associated with hosting the Asian and Olympic Games to limit Seoul's ability to underwrite extensive foreign aid commitments. [ ]

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We also expect South Korea to capitalize on recent North Korean setbacks by trying to reestablish embassies--or to close P'yongyang's missions--in Lesotho and Uganda. In 1983 and 1984, North Korea successfully pressed both governments to expel the South Korean ambassadors. In February, the new Lesotho Government announced that relations with Seoul would be normalized. [ ]

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Elsewhere, the South will continue to use economic inducements where it has no formal relations but has identified local interest in commercial ties--Somalia, Zambia, Guinea, Togo, Zimbabwe, Congo, Mali, Angola, and Cape Verde. Several of these countries are willing to permit the establishment of South Korean trade offices, holding out the possibility of gradual upgrading of ties to the ambassadorial level. Since this incremental approach is in all cases contingent on South Korean economic or military aid, we believe Seoul will consider the costs and benefits on a case-by-case basis. In 1985, for example, South Korea donated \$50,000 to Swaziland in a successful bid for a new embassy. In contrast, in the same year, a visiting South Korean Foreign Ministry official told US Embassy staff in Mogadishu that Somalia's economic demands were more than South Korea was willing to offer in exchange for diplomatic ties. [ ]

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South Korea probably will also call upon the United States and its other allies for assistance in selected cases. In 1984, for instance, Seoul asked Washington and Tokyo to intervene on its behalf during diplomatic and economic negotiations with Zambia. South Korea will also continue to seek support from friendly African countries--Zaire, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea--on Nonaligned and Olympic Games issues. [ ]

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## North and South Korea, Diplomatic Relations, March 1986

Regional total: 45 countries; 40 North Korea 27 South Korea

	<u>North Korea</u>	<u>South Korea</u>
Angola	yes	no
Benin	yes	no (severed 1975)
Botswana	yes	yes
Burkina Faso	yes	yes
Burundi	yes	no
Cameroon	yes	yes
Cape Verde	yes	no
Central African Republic	yes	yes
Chad	yes	yes
Comoros	no (severed 1983)	yes
Congo	yes	no
Djibouti	no	yes
Equatorial Guinea	yes	yes
Ethiopia	yes	yes
Gabon	yes	yes
The Gambia	yes	yes
Ghana	yes	yes
Guinea	yes	no
Guinea-Bissau	yes	yes
Ivory Coast	yes	yes
Kenya	no	yes
Lesotho	yes	yes
Liberia	yes	yes
Madagascar	yes	yes
Malawi	yes	yes
Mali	yes	no
Mauritius	yes	yes
Mozambique	yes	no
Niger	yes	yes
Nigeria	yes	yes
Rwanda	yes	no (severed 1980)
Sao Tome and Principe	yes	no
Senegal	yes	yes
Seychelles	yes	no (severed 1980)
Sierra Leone	yes	yes
Somalia	yes	no
South Africa	no	no
Sudan	yes	yes
Swaziland	no	yes
Tanzania	yes	no
Togo	yes	no (severed 1974)
Uganda	yes	yes
Zaire	yes	yes
Zambia	yes	no
Zimbabwe	yes	no
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Total 45 countries	40	27

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SUBJECT: Korean Competition in Africa: International  
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